

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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SUBJECT: 1978 SOHYO CONVENTION

REF: TOKYO 10322

1. SUMMARY: SOHYO ANNUAL CONVENTION JULY 16-19 RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT MAKIEDA AND SEC GEN TOMIZUKA TO SECOND TWO-YEAR TERMS, ADOPTED ACTION POLICY CALLING FOR CAMPAIGN THIS FALL ON BEHALF OF MAJOR INCOME TAX CUTS, AND CONDITIONALLY ENDORSED FORMER SOHYO PRESIDENT OTA FOR TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL RACE NEXT YEAR. CONVENTION ALSO TOOK SIGNIFICANT STEPS TOWARD IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH NON-COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS IN ADVANCED WESTERN NATIONS BY HAVING AFL-CIO VICE PRESIDENT SHANKER AND DGB REPRESENTATIVE SCHMIDT ADDRESS DELEGATES, RATHER THAN CUSTOMARY REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. SOHYO REMAINS VOLATILE MIXTURE OF IDEOLOGIES, AND HOW FAR LEADERSHIP CAN EXTEND POLICY OF BRIDGE-BUILDING TO WEST
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WITHOUT THREATENING ORGANIZATION UNITY REMAINS TO BE SEEN. WITH ATTENDANCE OF SHANKER, NEW POLICY PASSED FIRST MAJOR TEST; NEXT WILL BE MAKIEDA-MEANY MEETING THIS FALL. END SUMMARY.

2. SOHYO ANNUAL CONVENTION JULY 16-19 RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN MAKIEDA AND SEC GEN TOMIZUKA TO NEW TWO-YEAR TERMS.

WITH ORGANIZATION STILL GROPING FOR MORE PRODUCTIVE SPRING WAGE-NEGOTIATION STRATEGY AFTER FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF DISAPPOINTING SETTLEMENTS (REFTEL), AND FOR MORE EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ROLE AS PUBLIC OPINION MOVES SLOWLY TOWARD THE RIGHT, SOHYO'S AFFILIATES WERE IN NO MOOD TO TINKER WITH CURRENT LEADERSHIP. WHILE MAKIEDA AND TOMI-ZUKA HAVE DEVISED NO SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS, THEY HAVE AT LEAST WORKED DILIGENTLY TO MAINTAIN FEDERATION UNITY AND THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH NON-COMMUNIST TRADE UNIONS ABROAD REPRESENTS ONE OF FEW PRACTICAL INITIATIVES TO REVISE SOHYO'S OUTDATED POLICIES. CONVENTION ALSO ESTABLISHED FOUR NEW VICE CHAIRMENSHIPS, BRINGING TOTAL NUMBER TO EIGHT, IN EFFORT TO WIDEN PARTICIPATION OF AFFILIATES IN DECISION-MAKING, AND THEREBY STRENGTHEN AFFILIATE COMMITMENT TO CENTRAL LEADERSHIP.

3. CONVENTION ALSO ADOPTED NEW ACTION PROGRAM, WHICH CONTINUES LAST YEAR'S POLICY OF SEEKING IMPROVEMENTS IN WORKERS' LIVING STANDARDS BY PRESSURING DIET WITH THREAT OF STRIKES TO ENACT FEDERATION-SUPPORTED LEGISLATION. SOHYO DECIDED TO CAMPAIGN THIS FALL FOR ONE-TRILLION-YEN CUT; REVISION OF "UNFAIR" TAX SYSTEM; AND IMPROVEMENTS IN NATIONAL HEALTH-INSURANCE SYSTEM.
4. CONVENTION SESSIONS THEMSELVES WERE DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO DESULTORY DEBATE OVER HOW TO ADAPT FEDERATION'S TRADITIONAL OFFICIAL USE

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TIONAL SPRING WAGE NEGOTIATION CAMPAIGN TO MEET PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND LOW-WAGE GAINS IN CURRENT LOW-GROWTH ERA. ALL UNION LEADERS AT CONVENTION ACKNOWLEDGED THAT 1978 HAD WITNESSED FOURTH CONSECUTIVE DEFEAT FOR LABOR IN WAGE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT AS AT LAST YEAR'S CONVENTION, NEITHER LEADERSHIP NOR DELEGATES CAME UP WITH WIDELY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES TO CURRENT FEDERATION-WIDE SPRING STRIKES KEYED TO SHUTDOWN OF MAJOR PUBLIC RAILROAD LINES. DURING OPENING ADDRESS, MAKIEDA CALLED ON UNIONS TO REVIVE SPIRIT OF "FIGHTING SOHYO" OF 1950'S, AND TO STRENGTHEN FEDERATION COORDINATION IN SPRING-WAGE NEGOTIATIONS NEXT YEAR. HOWEVER, PROPOSAL BY TELECOMMUNICATION WORKERS (ZENDENTSU) THAT SOHYO AFFILIATES CONDUCT SPRING NEGOTIATIONS EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR IN COOPERATION WITH UNIONS IN RELATED INDUSTRIES OR PUBLIC SERVICES GAVE RISE TO CONVENTION DEBATE, FEDERATION LEADERSHIP EVENTUALLY AGREEING TO STUDY NEW IDEA IN ORDER TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WHICH MIGHT END IN ZENDENTSU PURSUING INDEPENDENT COURSE NEXT SPRING ANYWAY.

5. SOHYO ALSO FOUND ITSELF SEARCHING FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY IN POLITICAL ARENA. WHEREAS LAST YEAR'S CONVENTION AP-

PEARED RECEPTIVE TO INCREASED COOPERATION WITH CENTRIST PARTIES, ESPECIALLY CGP, DELEGATES THIS YEAR EXPRESSED FEAR THAT CENTRISTS HAVE BEEN MOVING TOWARD COOPERATION WITH LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THEREBY UNDERMINING LONG-TERM SOHYO GOAL OF SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT CENTERED ON JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY. AT SAME TIME, LEADERSHIP RECOGNIZED THAT WITHOUT COOPERATION OF CENTRISTS, SOHYO COULD NOT ACHIEVE SHORT-TERM TAX AND WELFARE GOALS ON BEHALF OF WORKERS. IN END, TO SIGNIFY ITS CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO COOPERATION WITH CONSERVATIVE ESTABLISHMENT, CONVENTION REVIVED POLITICAL SLOGAN, DROPPED LAST YEAR, OPPOSING "MONOPOLY CAPITALISM." AT SAME TIME, CONVENTION DE-

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CISIVELY DEFEATED PERENNIAL EFORT BY SUPPORTERS OF JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY TO END POLICY OF EXCLUSIVE SUPPORT FOR JSP, AND TO FREE SOHYO AFILIATES TO SUPPORT POLITICAL PARTY OF THEIR CHOICE (I.E., JCP).

6. POLITICAL SIDESHOW OF CONVENTION, WHICH IRONICALLY RECEIVED GREATEST PRESS ATTENTION, WAS DECISION FORMALLY TO SUPPORT CANDIDACY OF FORMER SOHYO CHAIRMAN AND CHEMICAL WORKERS (GOKA ROREN) PRESIDENT KAORU OTA'S CANDIDACY FOR TOKYO GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 1978. OTA, WHOSE FREQUENT AND UNPREDICTABLE POLITICAL SHIFTS HAVE ALIENATED MOST SOHYO LEADERS, HAS SINGLE-MINDEDLY

PROMOTED HIS UNLIKELY CANDIDACY, AND WITH JSP AS YET UN-
ABLE TO AGREE WITH OTHER OPPOSITION PARTIES ON SUITABLE
ALTERNATIVE, SOHYO LEADERSHIP WAS CONSTRAINED TO BACK
FELLOW UNIONIST. (MOREOVER, PRESS SPECULATED THAT SOHYO
LEADERSHIP WOULD PREFER TO SEE TROUBLESOME OTA IN
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AND OUT OF SOHYO.) HOWEVER, IN TACTICAL
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MOVE WHICH ONE DELEGATE DESCRIBED AS "CARVING A BUDDHA
BUT GIVING IT NO SOUL," CONVENTION DECIDED TO POSTPONE
UNTIL THIS FALL ANY DECISIONS ON CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION
AND FINANCES FOR OTA. BY THAT TIME, SOHYO LEADERSHIP
APPARENTLY HOPES JSP AND OTHER PARTIES WILL HAVE FOUND
MUTUALLY AGREEABLE CANDIDATE WHOM SOHYO COULD SUPPORT
IN INTERESTS OF UNIFIED FRONT WITH OTHER OPPOSITION
PARTIES.

7. NEW ACTION PROGRAM DEVOTED CONSIDERABLY MORE SPACE
TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS THAN IN YEARS PAST. ALTHOUGH
CRITICAL OF U.S. NUETRON-BOMB DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY
AID TO DEVELOPING NATIONS, PROGRAM REDUCED ITS CRITICISM
OF U.S. POLICY IN ASIA, TAKING NOTE OF CARTER ADMINISTRA-
TION EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THIRD-WORLD
NATIONS AND TO FOSTER HUMAN RIGHTS. ON INTERNATIONAL
LABOR AFFAIRS, PROGRAM SAID THAT EMPLOYMENT AND WORKERS'
LIVING STANDARDS INCREASINGLY DEPEND UPON ECONOMIC CO-
OPERATION WITH OTHER ADVANCED NATIONS, AND THAT TRADE
UNIONISTS MUST COOPERATE TO ENSURE THAT THEIR NATIONS'
POLICIES ON CURRENCY, TRADE, AND MULTINATIONAL CORPORA-
TIONS BENEFIT WORKERS. SOHYO, WHILE MAINTAINING "POSITIVE
NEUTRALITY" WOULD THEREFORE SEEK TO WORK WITH OTHER
NON-COMMUNIST, ADVANCED NATIONS' LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

8. TO IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY, ACTION PROGRAM SAID, SOHYO
WILL SEEK IN COMING YEAR TO ESTABLISH "CONTINUOUS AND
REGULAR" EXCHANGES WITH MAJOR U.S. AND EUROPEAN UNIONS;
TO STRENGTHEN TIES TO EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS;
TO PARTICIPATE IN OECD TRADE UNION ADVISORY COMMITTEE;
AND TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT OFFICE IN PARIS TO FACILITATE
INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS, ESPECIALLY VIS-A-VIS ILO AND TUAC.
IN ADDITION, DURING SPEECH INTRODUCING ACTION PROGRAM,
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SECGEN TOMIZUKA TOLD CONVENTION THAT MAKIEDA WOULD VISIT
U.S. FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH AFL-CIO IN OCTOBER, AND THAT
HE (TOMIZUKA) WOULD TRAVEL TO EUROPE IN NOVEMBER TO

CONSULT WITH EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS AND TO ESTABLISH NEW OFFICE. TOMIZUKA ALSO SAID THAT DELEGATES FROM FRENCH CGT AND BRITISH TUC WOULD VISIT JAPAN NEXT JANUARY AND MARCH, RESPECTIVELY. FINALLY PROGRAM ENCOURAGED MEMBER UNIONS TO AFFILIATE WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS, AND CALLED FOR EARLY U.S. RETURN TO ILO.

9. FROM U.S. VIEWPOINT, HIGHLIGHT OF CONVENTION WAS APPEARANCE ON SECOND DAY OF AFL-CIO VICE PRESIDENT ALBERT SHANKER, ALONG WITH WEST GERMAN DGB LEADER SCHMIDT, MARKING FIRST TIME IN ITS 30-YEAR HISTORY THAT TRADITIONALLY LEFT-LEANING SOHYO AGREED TO INVITE REPRESENTATIVES OF DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENT BUT NOT THOSE FROM COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE TRADITIONALLY ATTENDED SOHYO CONVENTIONS. SHANKER'S ADDRESS TO CONVENTION, WHICH STRESSED COMMON INTERESTS SHARED BY JAPANESE AND AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISTS IN THE AREAS SUCH AS DISARMAMENT AND TRADE, AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND COMMUNIST LABOR GROUPS, RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL APPLAUSE (AND NONE OF HECKLING SOHYO STAFFERS HAD PRIVATELY FEARED). SHANKER WAS FOLLOWED TO ROSTRUM BY SCHMIDT, WHOSE SPEECH STRESSED COMMON PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT FACING JAPANESE, EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISTS. ALL MAJOR PAPERS COVERED SPEECHES, EMPHASIZING CONCERN OVER TRADE PROBLEMS EXPRESSED BY SHANKER AND SCHMIDT.

10. COMMENT: JUDGING FROM ACTION POLICY AND CONVENTION DEBATE, SOHYO REMAINS COMMITTEED TO IDEAL OF ESTABLISHING MARXIAN SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN JAPAN. MOREOVER, AS MINISTRY OF LABOR OFFICIALS TOLD SHANKER IN PRESENCE OF EMBOFFS, PARTICIPATION OF WESTERN UNION LEADERS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOHYO CONVENTION, WHILE PROMISING DEVELOPMENT, STILL DID NOT GUARANTEE ORGANIZATION WAS FULLY COMMITTED TO TRUE PARTNERSHIP WITH NON-COMMUNIST UNIONS ABROAD. WITH THEIR OPENING TO WEST AT THIS CONVENTION, MAKIEDA AND TOMIZUKA HAVE CLEARLY TAKEN SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVE. HOWEVER, BECAUSE SOHYO HAS BEEN VOLATILE MIXTURE OF IDEOLOGIES, AND BECAUSE LEFTIST ELEMENTS WITH INFLUENCE IN MAJOR AFFILIATES AND IN SOHYO STAFF WILL CERTAINLY ATTEMPT TO BLOCK PROGRESS, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW FAR FEDERATION'S ELECTED LEADERS CAN GO WITH NEW BRIDGE-BUILDING EFFORTS. NEXT HURDLE WILL BE SOHYO MISSION TO U.S. THIS FALL, WHEN MAKIEDA AND AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY WILL REPORTEDLY EXPLORE IN DEPTH COMPATIBILITY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CONCEPTIONS OF FREE-TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT. MANSFIELD

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